

Dallas Sierra Club Newsletter - December , 2021



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Dallas Sierra Club Holiday Party - Sunday, December 12

As you know, we did not have a holiday party last year and we have not had an in-person General Meeting since March, 2020. So, now we are going to cautiously dip a toe in the water with a scaled back, low-key Holiday Party. Our party will be held at El Fenix Restaurant at 255 Casa Linda Plaza, on Sunday, December 12 at 6:00 pm until 9:00 pm. [Click here](#) for a map of the party's location

We have a whole room reserved and seating will be 4 per table. Masks are required except while eating. We encourage our vaccinated friends to attend. The whole El Fenix menu is available so you can order whatever you want to eat and drink.

We will have our usual free raffle tickets and prizes like Sierra Club calendars, shirts, and other green goodies. If you have that perfect gift to be recycled, you are welcome to donate it. Food pantry items also are welcome for a local food bank that is very low.

NOTE: There may be an anonymous donor with a white beard and a herd of reindeer pulling his Prius who will foot the bar tab for a free margarita or glass of wine. One per person. - signed, Ho Ho Ho aka Sack Boy . . . see Jim Carrey in How The Grinch Stole Christmas if you missed that line.

So, come on out and visit with friends you have not seen in a long time, have a great meal at a very reasonable price, and visit with like-minded environmentalists.

Dallas Sierra Club General Meeting via Zoom - Tuesday, December 14

Will this presentation bug you?

Leigh-Anne Lawton will talk about insects or arthropods that we may encounter outdoors this season in Texas. She is the regional medical entomologist for the Texas department of state health services. Studying at Texas A&M, Stephen F. Austin State University, and LSU in the field of entomology prepared Leigh-Anne to spend the majority of her life outside. She spent the last ten years in Papua, New Guinea, working to train individuals on how to protect themselves and others against malaria and other vector-borne diseases.



From 6:45 to 7:00 p.m. you can log in to the meeting, chat, and ask questions. The meeting will begin at 7:00 with announcements, followed by our speaker's presentation.

How to join the meeting via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99535860396>

One tap mobile: +13462487799,,99535860396#

Dial in: +1 346 248 7799

Meeting ID: 995 3586 0396

Dallas Sierra Club General Meeting via Zoom - Tuesday, January 11

Fix the Grid

Dave Cortez, Director of the Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter, will talk about working to promote development of a sustainable, reliable, and affordable U.S. electric grid for 21st-century renewable energy.

Dave Cortez is a third generation El Pasoan now based out of Austin where he lives with his partner and almost 4 year old daughter. He grew up and learned organizing on the frontera, where industrial pollution, poverty, gentrification, racism and the border wall are seen as intersecting issues. Dave has been organizing in the Texas environmental movement for 16 years.

The recent winter storm was the latest example of a crisis of multiple intersecting struggles. While Dave and his family were without power for about 60 hours and without water for several days, the trauma and stress of protecting his toddler daughter from the stress of the storm still lingers. Dave is supporting staff and volunteers across Texas who are organizing to center racial justice and equity in their work to win environmental justice, to expand clean energy, and to protect the land and resources so every Texan has access to clean water and clean air.

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Note from the Chair

by Dan Moulton

Many people are wondering if and when we will resume in-person meetings at Brookhaven College. It will not be before April, 2022. David Griggs, who teaches as an adjunct at Brookhaven, is trying to negotiate a contract for a room for April - December, 2022. Reorganization at Dallas College has resulted

in less than smooth sledding for his negotiations. Several Excom members who will have difficulty attending meetings at Brookhaven, have requested a virtual option. We will do our best to honor that request.

Hopefully, 2022 is going to be an improvement over the last couple of years!

Happy Holidays to all Sierrans and thank you for all you do for the Dallas Group. Keep the faith, 90% of life is just showing up.

Outings

by Mark Stein

We're Doing Something Right with Outings

This letter from Ally Shuman, whom some of you will remember from outings in the late twenty-teens, arrived immediately after the November issue of *Outings News* reflected on day hikes, leader training, and the upcoming Big Bend trip. Ally's gratitude for the Dallas Sierra Club's outings program relates to many people who deserve her thanks and mine. That includes Arthur, Liz, so many patient, diligent leaders past and present that I can't name them all, delightful companions, and eager, anxious novice hikers. You're doing something right, outings team! And thank you, Ally, for your kind words:

*Hi Mark,
I am so grateful to this group for getting me started in backpacking. I have completed several solo trips and even hiked the entire Superior Hiking Trail in 2019! I have moved back to my native Minnesota and will miss being part of the Dallas Sierra Club, but have already explored membership with the local team here.*

Thank you again for your leadership.

Ally

Ally's message is printed with permission. The next issue of *Outings News* will relate text from a follow-up message in which Ally relates a very special trip to New Mexico with the Dallas Sierra Club that changed her life.

ICO - Inspiring Connections Outdoors

by Liz Wheelan

THE PERFECT HOLIDAY GIFT - Help get a kid into nature!

Looking for a meaningful gift, one that's perfect for anyone on your list and can also change a child's life? Consider donating to ICO in honor or memory of a loved one. ICO (Inspiring Connections Outdoors) is Dallas Sierra Club's amazing program that, thanks to dedicated volunteers, provides outings into nature for underserved youth, all at no cost to the participants. Your donation would greatly help toward costs of the program which include:

- Food (yes, including marshmallows and hot chocolate!)
- Gear and storage
- Entrance fees to parks, nature preserves
- Transportation
- Leader training including first aid

Donations of any amount are most welcome. They can be payable to Dallas ICO or, if you want it to be tax deductible, make payment payable to The Sierra Club Foundation/Dallas ICO. Mail to: Liz Wheelan, ICO Chair, 8820 Southwestern Blvd, # 1007, Dallas TX 75206. Questions: email Lizwico@aol.com or call 214 207 4997. Time permitting, we're happy to send a card acknowledging your gift if you want to put it under the tree for that special someone. Volunteers are also needed. Let us know if you're interested!



Profile: Mark Stein, Outings Committee Chair

I was an Eagle Scout with ample experience at camping and hiking, but I'd never backpacked. My first backpacking trip came in 1993 -- to the South Rim in Big Bend National Park. I persuaded my son, then age 13, to lead me on a shakedown outing to prepare me for ten days at Philmont Scout Ranch, New Mexico. I enjoyed the Big Bend trip and two summer trips to Philmont so much that I organized backpacking trips with my friends after my son left for college.

My first Sierra Club outing was in 1997. The Club chartered a sleeper bus with driver for a backpacking trip to the White Mountains Wilderness, near Ruidoso, New Mexico. Late at night, our "Midnight Coach" was stopped for speeding near Lamesa, Texas. The county sheriff found outstanding arrest warrants for the driver, who was escorted to jail in Lamesa after deputy sheriffs escorted our bus to a gas station where we could sleep on a hot bus, pavement, or grass until a relief driver from Dallas would arrive in the morning. I could see then that Sierra Club outings might prove interesting, although it was a couple of years before I chanced a second outing.



I became a Sierra Club outings leader in 2009. For six or seven years, I've chaired the Outings Committee. Planning trips and going on them is something I enjoy, whether trekking in mountains or touring the planet. I'm thankful for a string of memorable backpacking trips and stories, many with the Dallas Sierra Club. My favorite destinations have been the Pecos Wilderness (New Mexico), the Four Passes Loop in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness (Colorado), South San Juan Wilderness (Colorado), Grand Canyon, Big Bend, and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks, Bandelier National Monument (New Mexico), and Paria Canyon (Utah/Arizona). Although planning trips can be fun, it's the social aspect of the trips with friends who also savor (or at least tolerate) the trips that make outings even more rewarding.

Let Us Know

Please let us know **your opinion**. Give us **an article** for the newsletter. Give us **feedback** on articles. What would you like to see in the newsletter? Changes? Improvements? What **books** do you recommend? Please let us know. This is YOUR newsletter. Feedback is welcome (comments, suggestions, letters to the Editor, etc.). Submit feedback to newsletter@dallassierraclub.org

Previous issues of our newsletter are available [here](#).

Recommended reading

Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About The World -- And Why Things Are Better Than You Think by Hans Rosling

When asked simple questions about global trends - why the world's population is increasing; how many young women go to school; how many of us live in poverty - we systematically get the answers wrong. So wrong that a chimpanzee choosing answers at random will consistently outguess journalists, Nobel laureates, and investment bankers.

The world, for all its imperfections, is in a much better state than we might think. But when we worry about everything all the time instead of embracing a worldview based on facts, we can lose our ability to focus on the things that threaten us most. This book offers a new explanation of why this happens, and reveals the ten instincts that distort our perspective.

This book might change the way you see the world.
Available at local libraries and at local and online bookstores

***The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate - Discoveries from a Secret World* by Peter Wohlleben**

This fascinating book explains the science behind the secret and previously unknown life of trees and their communication abilities. Trees communicate through underground fungal networks; they share nutrients, send distress signals, and nurture each other. As a result of such interactions, trees in a family or community are protected and can live to be very old. In contrast, solitary trees, like street kids, have a tough time of it and in most cases die much earlier than those in a group. - Kirk Miller

Available at local libraries and at local and online bookstores

***Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed To Reverse Global Warming* by Paul Hawken**

This book lists one hundred things that could draw down carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. These are practical, economical things (many are technologies) that are cost-effective and can be done now. Hawken writes a paragraph or two about each item -- in non-technical language -- giving the methodology and science behind each. Very interesting. - Kirk Miller

Available at local libraries and at local and online bookstores

Previous book recommendations are [here](#).



Et Cetera

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The wind will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off

like autumn leaves. - John Muir

Not all who wander are lost - JRR Tolkien

You trek a lot. Do you Everest?

Limerick

The psychiatrist made a confession
When he talked in a camping bull session.
"When I go on a hike,
There's one thing I dislike:
It is falling into a depression."
- by Kirk Miller

Vitruvian lights

Be sure to experience Vitruvian Lights this month. From Midway Road, go west on Spring Valley Road to Vitruvian Way. [Click here](#) for more information and a map.

Parking spaces right at the park may be difficult to find, especially on weekends. Go during the week when crowds should be smaller. And go during nice weather so you won't be cold while walking through the park. If it isn't windy, the lake will be smooth, making for better reflections in the water.



Videos of prior General Meetings are on YouTube

[Click here](#) for a list of meetings with varied topics such as national parks Critterman, beautiful photos from around the world, wild animals, activism, and more.

Dallas Sierra Club Outreach Speakers Program - Speakers for Your Group

The Dallas Sierra Club provides outdoor/environmental education in the form of entertaining and informative presentations by Dallas Sierra Club members

with expertise in the topics offered. These presentations range in length from 30 minutes to one hour and cover a variety of topics in the general categories of outdoor adventure, environmental education, and general ecology. These talks are appropriate for a wide range of audiences including youth groups, school classes, civic and social groups, nature and gardening clubs, church groups, etc. Any group interested in an available topic is welcome to contact us. To see available topics and to schedule your speaker, [click here](#).

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Here is our calendar for the next few months. For complete listings, visit us at www.DallasSierraClub.org.

December 12, Sunday - Holiday Party

Visit in person with friends. Click [this link](#) to see details on our home page.

December 14, Tuesday - General Meeting

This presentation might bug you. Click [this link](#) to see details on our home page.

January 5, Wednesday - Dallas Sierra Club Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee (Excom) is the elected governing body of the Dallas Sierra Club and meets at 6:30 p.m. via ZOOM. For more information, contact the Dallas Group Chair.

January 22-23, Saturday-Sunday - Outings Leader Training

SAVE THIS WEEKEND for Outings Leader Training for new leaders! Whether your interest is day hikes or multi-day backpacking, the Dallas Sierra Club actively seeks new leaders. We've reserved the heated meeting space and dining hall at Eisenhower State Park, near Denison, for new leader training. Sleep Saturday night in your tent or inside the building on your air mattress or cot. Come for tales from current leaders and role-playing situations you might experience as a leader. The only fee for the weekend is a \$10 park admission. This is an event offered only once every year or two. Don't miss it! Call or email for inquiries. Coordinator: Mark Stein [Send Email](#) 214 526 3733

February 9-13, Wednesday-Sunday - Big Bend National Park

We missed our annual outing to hike in the Big Bend due to COVID in 2021, but we're going there in 2022! This year's trip will offer a choice of three hiking/backpacking itineraries for a maximum of 25 participants. We've reserved campsites in the Chisos Basin, the Chisos Mountains, and Rio Grande Village. See how the Chisos ecosystem is recovering from a spring 2021 fire in the Chisos Mountains or view Boquillas Canyon from the remote Marufo Vega Trail. [Click here](#) for complete trip details and sign-up information. Coordinator: Mark Stein [Send Email](#) 214 789 4596
